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ABSTRACT

This unit is one of a series that presents specific moments in history from which students focus on the meanings of landmark events. This unit challenges the idea that Africa was backward and unknown to the outside world before the arrival of the Europeans. It shows that strong leadership and well organized societies had existed in Africa long before European colonialism. Here, as in medieval Europe, kings' strength and respectability heavily depended on the material wealth they possessed. They shared this wealth among their most loyal followers, who in turn shared it among those they ruled or commanded. One of the greatest and most far reaching empires of the later middle ages was in West Africa. The kingdom of Mali stunned both the Muslim and the Christian worlds with its wealth, power, and influence. One of Mali's greatest leaders, the emperor Mansa Musa awakened the world to Mali's greatness in 1324 on his pilgrimage to Mecca when he spent and distributed so much gold that it deflated its price in Cairo for the next 12 years. Several Arab scholars were so impressed by this man that they followed him back to Mali to investigate further this amazing civilization. The writings of these scholars serve as the primary source documents for this unit. Through the examination, interpretation, and synthesis of these writings, students will be able to draw conclusions about the people and culture of Mali, the role of the emperor, and the nature of Mansa Musa himself. Contains seven references. (Author/DK)

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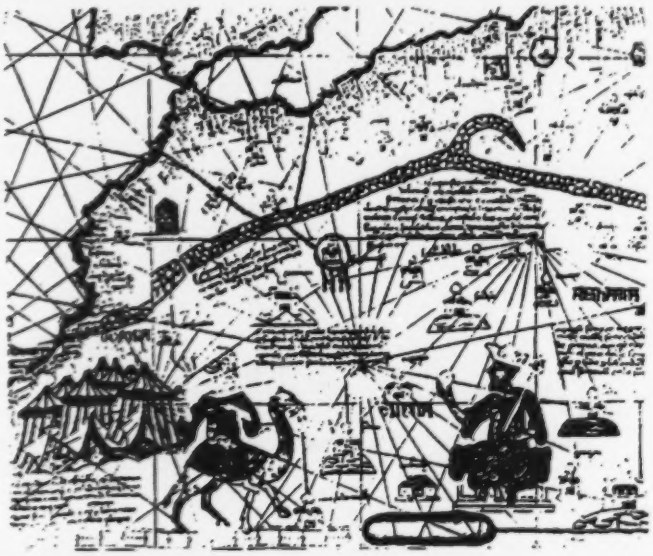
ED 376 113

MANSA MUSA: AFRICAN KING OF GOLD

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 7-9

By Joe Palumbo
Teacher Associate, NCHS

"This king is the greatest of the Muslim kings of the Sudan. He rules the most extensive territory, has the most numerous army, is the bravest, the richest, the most fortunate, the most victorious over his enemies, and the best able to distribute benefits."



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Mansa Musa, king of Ancient Mali, holds a huge gold nugget in his hand, attracting an Arab trader. This map, drawn in 1375, comes from Catalan, Spain. The extent of the Mali empire is shown by the defensive wall arching across the Sahara Desert in the upper part of the picture.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
A Cooperative Research Program of the
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and the National Endowment for the Humanities

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On the cover: Catalen Atlas by Abraham Cresques, colored ink on parchment, 1375, British Museum, London.

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Finally, we acknowledge the continuing contributions of the National Endowment for the Humanities which established the National Center for History in the Schools in March 1988 and has generously supported this activity.

For information on additional teaching units and other resources from the Center, please write:

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APPROACH AND RATIONALE

By Linda Symcox

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching **Mansa Musa: African King of Gold**. Our units are the fruit of a year-long collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific "**dramatic moments**" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

In our approach, the continuing narrative provides the context in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning-point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our dramatic moments are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **first-hand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a **second-hand** account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very

nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to re-create for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans** with **Student Resources**. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or

cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography for the unit.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction, rather than rote memorization.

A JOURNEY TO MECCA

The cool winds of night blew across the desert. It was time to move on. They had escaped the cruel rays of the desert sun by resting that day at a small oasis one night's journey from Cairo. As both the animals and slaves slowly wound their way out of the tiny clump of water-soaked soil and vegetation, only one man was not walking.

The slaves let out small groans as they lifted the litter of their king onto their backs for tonight's passage. Many felt honored to be so close to this man and would gladly bear him to Mecca on their own back if it was so required. To the sides of the litter some slaves waved leaves of palm while others sang a sweet song of home all to insure the comfort of the great lord.

Everyone walked, for the animals carried a burden too precious and heavy to be carried by men alone. Each of the hundred animals carried two large sacks that hung down on either side and weighed nearly three hundred pounds. Not only the animals carried the precious burden, the slaves who numbered almost 600 each carried six pounds of the cargo along with the usual baggage carried on a long-distance journey.

As the sun reached above the horizon the great caravan entered the city of Cairo. The people were stunned. Such riches they had never seen. Each camel of the great king's entourage was weighted down with hundreds of pounds of pure gold. Each of the 600 slaves carried gold staffs which shone in the morning sun. Yet, what was most amazing was when the king, seeing a group of poor beggars and finding that they too sought Mecca, ordered some gold be given to them. It was done and the poor wept with joy at the feet of this great king.

In the next few days so much gold was spent and given away in the city that for the next twelve years the price of gold went down, for there was so much of it in circulation.

Eventually, the great king moved on in search of Mecca, but the people of Cairo never forgot him. It was said about him that he "was the richest and most noble king in all the land."

QUESTIONS FOR DRAMATIC MOMENT

Questions can be answered orally or written in notebooks and discussed.

1. Who do you think this king is? Does he sound familiar to you?

2. What can you tell about him and the land he comes from?

3. What country do you think he comes from and how do you know?

Unless your students have studied Africa already, few might guess that this king is from West Africa. Explain that this king's name is Mansa Musa and he comes from the kingdom of Mali and that for the next few days you will be studying him and his empire. Together you will attempt to unlock the secrets of his kingdom and his fabulous wealth that so impressed the people of Cairo in 1324.

I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

One of the greatest and most far-reaching empires of the later middle ages was in West Africa. The kingdom of Mali stunned both the Muslim and the Christian world with its wealth, power and influence. One of Mali's greatest leaders, the emperor Mansa Musa awakened the world to Mali's greatness in 1324 on his pilgrimage to Mecca when he spent and distributed so much gold that it deflated its price in Cairo for the next twelve years.

Several Arab scholars were so impressed by this man that they followed him back to Mali to investigate further this amazing civilization. The writings of these scholars serve as the primary source documents for this unit. Through the examination, interpretation and synthesis of these writings, students will be able to draw conclusions about the people and culture of Mali, the role of the emperor and the nature of Mansa Musa himself.

The investigation of African kingdoms is crucial to a more complete understanding of world history. For too long Africa has been treated as the backwater of history with students and teachers alike having limited content knowledge in this area. It will be a fascinating and enlightening project for students to learn about an African who 14th century Europeans described as "the richest and most noble king in all the land."

This unit challenges the idea that Africa was "a dark continent" and unknown to the outside world before the arrival of the Europeans. It will show that strong leadership and well-organized societies had existed in Africa long before European colonialism. Here, as in medieval Europe, the kings' strength and respectability heavily depended on the material wealth they possessed. They shared this wealth among their most loyal followers,

(often chiefs, lords, or military leaders), who in turn shared it among those they ruled or commanded.

It is important also in presenting this topic, to remind students that the rule of the kings was by no means democratic as we understand democracy today. Any differences between various reigns were due to the personality or the unique forces in operation within individual societies. The focus should thus be on appreciation rather than a blind glorification of the past, as the past was not faultless.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit would fit best during a study of the late middle ages (1300-1517). It would be most effective if it were placed in the chronological framework of events occurring in Europe and the Arab world and not set apart as a topic exclusive to itself. If time permits, an investigation into both the kingdoms of Ghana and Songhay, which flourished before and after Mali, would be helpful, although the unit can be taught alone. It is however essential that students will have previously studied the rise of Islam since Mali was an area that had converted to Islam.

The unit will also provide vital information about Africa during its "glorious" days before the European conquest. The independence of leadership, the pride of the people, and the affluence of many African states (many societal ills regardless), can be exemplified by Mansa Musa. This topic may therefore serve as an important background for the study of European imperialism and its impact on Africa.

III. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. Students will become familiar with Mali's geographic location.

2. Students will read several primary source documents by Arab scholars who visited Mali in the 14th century.

3. Students will synthesize the readings and draw conclusions about the nature of Mali's people and place, policies of the emperor, customs surrounding the emperor, and the nature of Mansa Musa himself.

4. Students will evaluate their conclusions and begin to grapple with the question of historical perspective. Whose view of Mali is this? What bias might the Arab scholars have? What bias might the students have? How accurate can our conclusions be?

5. Students should reach the conclusion that even the best of histories are limited by the perspectives of those who write them.

6. As a culminating activity students will choose one area of Mali which they studied and create an enrichment project. The projects can include but are not limited to: writing activities, artwork, role play and group or individual presentations.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO MANSA MUSA: AFRICAN KING OF GOLD

The great political problem in the western region of the Western Sudan was how to bring peace and order into the confusion which had followed the collapse of Ghana. The problem was tackled, and largely solved, by a Mali emperor whose name became more famous even than that of Sundiata. This was Mansa Kankan Musa, who carried Mali to the height of its power and thrust its fame far across the world.

Mansa Musa came to power in around1312. By the time of his death in 1337, Mali had grown into one of the largest empires in the world.* What Mansa Musa accomplished was to repeat the success of Ghana on a more ambitious scale. He already had firm control of the trading routes to those lands. Now he brought the lands of the middle Niger under his control, and enclosed the key trading cities of Timbuktu and Gao within his empire. He imposed his rule on southern Saharan trading cities like Walata, and pushed his armies northward until their influence was felt as far as the salt deposits of Taghaza on the other side of the desert. He sent them eastward beyond Gao to the very frontiers of Hausaland, westward into Tekrur and the lands of the Fulani and Tucolor, and brought those countries, too, under his dominion.

Through twenty-five successful years Mansa Musa progressively enclosed a large part of the central and western regions of the Western Sudan within a single system of law and order. He did this so well that Ibn Batuta,

*The year of Musa's death is often given as 1332. But the great North African historian, Ibn Khaldun, whose writings remain the best source of information on the dates of the rulers of Mali, has recorded that Musa was still alive in 1337.

travelling through Mali some twelve years after the great emperor's death, could find "complete and general safety in the land." It was a grand political success, and it made Mansa Musa into one of the greatest statesmen of his time.

The Dyula or Wangara traders of Kangaba grew in strength with the widening power of Mali. Their trading groups began to spread into many parts of West Africa, pushing their enterprises far down into the forest lands as well as across the plains of the north.

This was also a period of Islamic expansion in the Western Sudan. Unlike the rulers of Ghana, Mansa Musa had accepted the new religion. Many lesser rulers followed him. So did some of their peoples. Other rulers and peoples remained loyal to their own religions, but Islam steadily widened its influence. More and more West Africans went on pilgrimage to Mecca. More and more Arabs and Egyptians visited Mali. Trade and Islam grew together, and both prospered.

Mansa Musa himself made a famous pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. His magnificent journey through the Egyptian capital of Cairo was long remembered with admiration and surprise throughout Egypt and Arabia, for Musa took with him so much gold and gave away so many golden gifts that "the people of Cairo earned incalculable sums" thanks to his visit. So lavish was Musa with his gifts that he upset the value of goods on the Cairo market. Gold became more plentiful and therefore less valued and prices rose accordingly. The North African scholar Al-Omari, who lived in Cairo a few years after Mansa Musa's visit and wrote the words quoted above, declared that of all the Muslim rulers of West Africa Musa was "the most powerful, the richest, the most fortunate, the most feared by his enemies, and the most able to do good to

those around him." Behind these words of praise one may glimpse the power and reputation that Mali drew from its control of a very wide region of trade in precious goods such as gold, salt, ivory, and kola nuts.

Mali was now a world power, and recognized as such. Under Mansa Musa, Mali ambassadors and royal agents were established in Morocco, Egypt, and elsewhere. Mali's capital was visited by North African and Egyptian scholars. On returning from pilgrimage, Mansa Musa brought back with him a number of learned men from Egypt. These settled in Mali and Timbuktu. One of them, called As-Saheli, is said to have designed new mosques at Gao and Timbuktu, and built a palace for the emperor. The fashion of building houses of brick became popular among wealthy people in the cities of the Western Sudan.

Niani, the capital of this empire, has long since disappeared. Yet as late as the sixteenth century, the Moroccan traveller Leo Africanus could still describe it as a place of "six thousand hearths," and its inhabitants as "the most civilized, intelligent, and respected" of all the peoples of the Western Sudan.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. The Geography of Mali & Africa

2. Mansa Musa & Mali

3. Historical Bias

4. Student Projects

LESSON ONE

THE GEOGRAPHY OF MALI & AFRICA

A. Objectives

1. Students will correctly label a map of 14th century Africa.

2. Students will be able to recognize the kingdom of Mali and understand how it relates to the geography of Europe and the Middle East.

3. Students will interpret the map and begin to draw conclusions about the kingdom of Mali based on information in the map.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Tell the students that they are going to be working on a map of Africa with the goal of placing the story they have just heard about Mansa Musa into the framework of geography that they are already familiar with.

2. Share **Resource I**, the Student Map, with students while you either draw a matching, unlabeled map on the board or create an overhead transparency.

3. Ask the students if they can identify anything on the map. As you call on students, label correct identifications on your map while asking the students to do the same. The main points that should be located before moving on to the next item are as follows:

Sahara Desert	Red Sea
Atlantic Ocean	Nile River
Black Sea	Islamic World
Christian Europe	Mediterranean Sea

These points should aid the students in seeing Mali in the geographic context of what they have already been studying.

4. At this point identify for them the kingdom of Mali, the Niger River, and three important cities in Mali (Timbuktu, Gao and Jenne). Ask the students:

   a. What connection is there between the location of the cities and the location of the river?

   b. What kind of comparison in size can you make between the kingdom of Mali and countries of Europe you've studied?

   c. What conclusions can you begin to draw about Mali?

5. Call the students' attention to the three cities (see #4) of North Africa and label them. Ask the students:

   a. How might these cities be important to Mali? (trading centers on the Mediterranean Sea)

   b. What geographical feature separates them from Mali? (the Sahara)

   c. How is that distance overcome? (Explain the concept of the desert caravan and relate it to the story read in the Dramatic Moment.)

6. Draw in the most common trade routes and have the students label them on their maps.

   a. From what little we know of Mali what do they seem to have much of that they could trade? (gold)

7. Identify the Wagara gold fields and have the stu-

dents do the same. Ask the following questions and let the students study their maps to see if they can draw the connection themselves:

a. Look at where Timbuktu is located: Why does everything seem to pass through Timbuktu after it leaves the Sahara?

b. What might Timbuktu be a convenient place for? (A transfer point from the desert caravans to the boats of the Niger, a port of the "desert ocean". Comparisons can be drawn if the students are at all familiar with a modern port at which containers are transferred from ships to trucks and trains.)

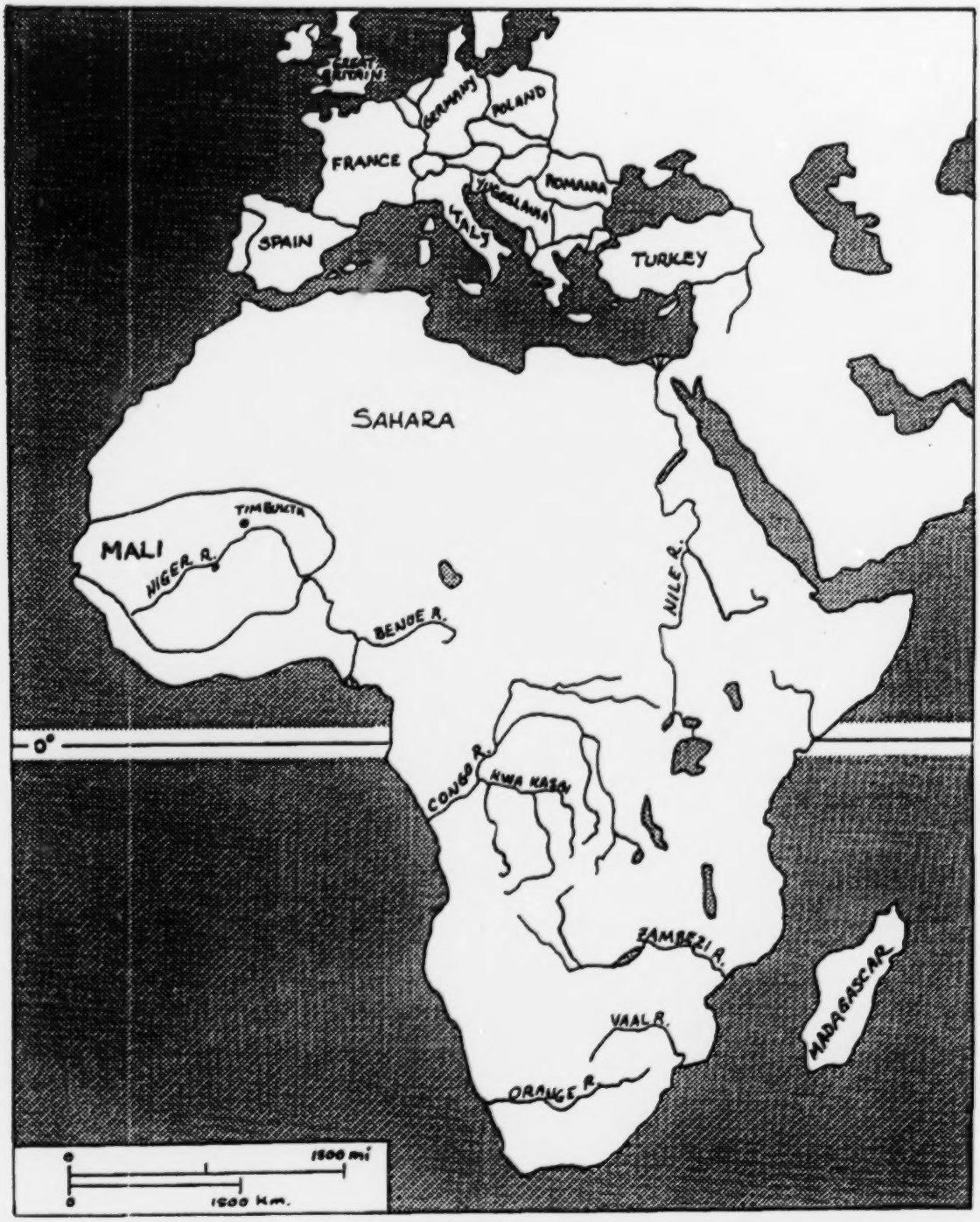
8. At this point you can do either of the following activities based on your own class and the resources available to you:

a. Give students an atlas which has a graphic-relief map of Africa and ask them to color in the rest of the continent based on that graphic relief map.

b. Give students colors and ask them to complete their map as a limited political map of the 14th century.

Kingdom of Mali	One Color
Christian Europe	One Color
Islamic States	One Color
Middle East	One Color

9. As a closure, remind the students that they will need this map everyday of this unit and it would be a good idea to give a short quiz on this map to open the class the next day.



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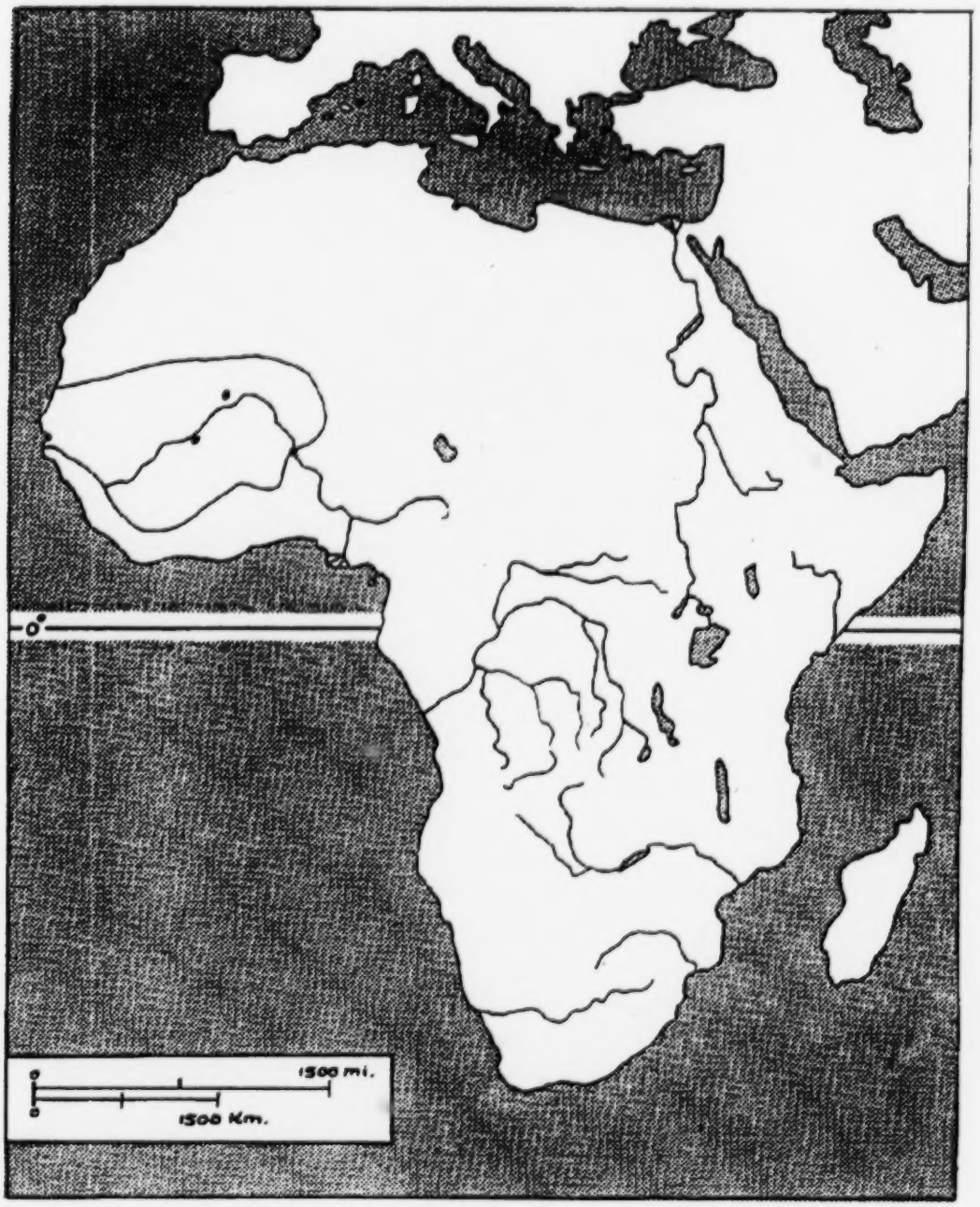
MAP OF AFRICA



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LESSON TWO

MANSA MUSA & MALI

A. Objectives

1. Students, working in cooperative groups, will read primary source documents written by Arab scholars in the 14th century.

2. Student groups will restate many of the statements made in the readings and try to identify facts that they can learn about Mali from these statements.

3. Student groups, once they have located facts, will attempt to interpret those facts to draw some broader conclusions about the kingdom of Mali.

4. Student groups will report back to the class their findings and all students will complete a Summary of Information sheet which records the entire class's conclusions.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Explain to the class that after Mansa Musa's visit to the Arab world he created such an interest in Mali that several Arab scholars followed him back home. While in Mali they wrote down many of the things they saw and learned. Today you are going to read some of these writings and see what secrets you can uncover about Mali. We have no written evidence from the language of the people of Mali until later times so almost all that we want to learn about Mali we have to get from these readings.

2. Divide the class into five groups. Each group should look at a different set of readings dealing with different aspects of Mali. Each group will be responsible

for being the expert on that subject and reporting their findings to rest of the class. The subjects are:

a. What customs surrounded the King?

b. What were some of the duties of the King?

c. What was Mali the place like?

d. What were the people of Mali like?

e. What was Mansa Musa like?

3. Share the correct readings with each group. Have each group appoint a secretary, a timekeeper, and a spokesperson. Each set of readings is divided into short numbered segments. It is most time-efficient if the students decide among themselves who is going to work on which documents and then periodically share their information with the other members in their group.

4. The questions below each segment will help the students to think critically about the readings. They force the students to interact with the entire document and help avoid skimming. Depending on your class and your teaching style, you may want answers to each question written in complete sentences on another piece of paper or you may simply want the students to write down the main points they think are important.

5. Make sure you circulate around the room as some of the language can be difficult. If your class has many below-grade level readers you should go over important vocabulary first.

6. Give the students a 10-minute warning and tell them to make sure that they have shared all their informa-

tion and that the spokespersons are aware of what they will report to the class. Each group should be prepared to state at least two facts and two conclusions for each segment of their readings. Encourage students to make the information as interesting as possible.

7. Call time and pass out the Summary of Information sheet to every student. Explain that as each group reports their facts and conclusions, they are responsible for recording that information so that when they're done they will have a complete record of the class findings on Mali.

8. Begin the student reports. If the spokesperson has any trouble any member of the group may help him or her out. As the students present, ask them questions to draw out more information if necessary, and also encourage other students to ask questions.

9. When all the presentations are finished explain to the class that what they have just done is historical research and they have written their own history of Mali based on primary source documents. Tomorrow you will take this one step further and evaluate your class history.

10. Homework Assignment:

    Have the students write a one day diary entry for a person who might have lived in Mali. It can be anyone in the society so long as what they talk about is based on something they learned in their research of the readings.

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET I

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION SHEET

Customs Surrounding the King	
Facts	Conclusions
Duties of the King	
Facts	Conclusions
Mali the Place	
Facts	Conclusions
The People of Mali	
Facts	Conclusions
Mansa Musa Himself	
Facts	Conclusions

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

CUSTOMS SURROUNDING THE KING AND HIS COURT
(Primary Sources)

SEGMENT I:

The sultan comes out of a door in a corner of the palace, carrying a bow in his hand and a quiver on his back. On his head he has a golden skullcap, bound with a gold band which has narrow ends shaped like knives, more than a span in length. His usual dress is a velvety red tunic, made of the European fabric called mutanfas. The sultan is preceded by his musicians, who carry gold and silver guimbris [two-stringed guitars], and behind him come three hundred armed slaves.

He walks in a leisurely fashion, affecting a very slow movement, and even stops from time to time. On reaching the pempi he stops and looks round the assembly, then ascends it in the sedate manner of a preacher ascending a mosque-pulpit. As he takes his seat the drums, trumpets, and bugles are sounded. Three slaves go out at a run to summon the sovereign's deputy and the military commanders, who enter and sit down. Two saddled and bridled horses are brought, along with two goats, which they hold to serve as a protection against the evil eye. Dugha [musician] stands at the gate and the rest of the people remain in the street, under the trees.

The Negroes are of all people the most submissive to their king and the most abject in their behavior before him. They swear by his name. . . . If he summons any of them while he is holding an audience in his pavilion, the person summoned takes off his clothes and puts on warm garments, removes his turban, and dons a dirty skullcap, and enters with his garments and trousers raised knee-high. He goes forward in an attitude of humility and dejection, knocks the ground hard with his elbows, then stands with bowed head and bent back listening to what [the sultan] says.

If anyone addresses the king and receives a reply from him, [that person] uncovers his back and throws dust over his head and back, for all the world like a bather splashing himself with water. I used to wonder how it was they did not blind themselves. If the sultan delivers any remarks during his audience, those present take off their turbans and put them down, and listen in silence to what he says.

Sometimes one of them stands up before him and recalls his deeds in the sultan's service, saying "I did so-and-so on such a day" or "I killed so-and-so on such a day." Those who have knowledge of this confirm his words, which they do by plucking the cord of the bow and releasing it [with a twang], just as an archer does when shooting an arrow. If the sultan says "truly spoken" or thanks him, [the man] removes his clothes and "dusts." That is their idea of good manners.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe in your own words what goes on in the palace of the king of Mali?

2. How must a person appear before the king and can you think why?

3. What must a person do with the dust?

SEGMENT II:

Whoever sneezes while the king is holding court is severely beaten and he permits nobody to do so. But if a sneeze comes to anybody he lies down face to ground to sneeze so that nobody may know of it. As for king, if he sneezes all those present beat their breasts with their hands.

QUESTION:

1. What is the purpose of this rule?

SEGMENT III:

The king of this realm sits in his palace on a big dais (mastaba) which they call banbi on a big seat (dakka) made of ebony like a throne (takht) and of a size for a very heavily-built sitter (al-mutajallis al-'azim al-muttasi'). Over the dais, on all sides, are elephant tusks one beside the other. He has with him his arms, which are all of gold - sword, javelin (mizraq), quiver, bow, and arrows (nush-shab). He wears big trousers cut out of about twenty pieces which none but he wears. About 30 slaves (mamluk) stand behind him, Turks and others who are bought for him in Egypt. One of them carries in his hand a parasol (jitr) of silk surmounted by a dome and a bird of gold in the shape of a falcon. This is borne on the king's left. His emirs sit around

in the shape of a falcon. This is borne on the king's left. His emirs sit around and below him in two ranks to right and left. Further away are seated the chief horsemen of his army. In front of him there stands a man to attend him, who is his executioner [or swordbearer: sayyaf], and another, called sha'ir "poet" who is his intermediary (safir) between him and the people. Around all these are people with drums in their hands, which they beat. Before the kings are people dancing and he is pleased with them and laughs at them. Behind him two flags are unfurled, and before him two horses are tied ready for him to ride whenever he wishes...A custom of this sultan is that he does not eat in the presence of anybody, but eats always alone.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think this custom existed?

SEGMENT IV:

...And it is a custom of his people that if one of them should have reared a beautiful daughter he offers her to the king as a concubine (ama mawstu'a) and he possesses her without a marriage ceremony as slaves are possessed, and this in spite of the fact that Islam has triumphed among them and that they follow the Malikite school and that this sultan Musa was pious and assiduous in prayer, Koran reading, and mentioning God [dhikr].

"I said to him (said Ibn Amir Hajib) that this was not permissible for a Muslim, whether in law (shar') or reason ('aql), and he said: 'Not even for kings?' and I replied: 'No! not even for kings! Ask the scholars!' He said: 'By God, I did not know that. I hereby leave it and abandon it utterly!'

QUESTIONS:

1. What had been a custom of the king?
2. Why was it wrong at this time?
3. What did the king do about it?
4. What does this say about the sultan?

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

SEGMENT V:

Nobody may enter the abode of this king save barefooted, whoever he may be. Anyone who does not remove his shoes, inadvertently or purposely is put to death without mercy. Whenever one of the emirs or another comes into the presence of this king he keeps him standing before him for a time. Then the newcomer makes a gesture with his right hand like one who beats the drum of honour (juk) in the lands of Turan and Iran. If the king bestows a favour upon a person or makes him a fair promise or thanks him for some deed the person who has received the favour grovels before him from one end of the room to the other. When he reaches there the slaves of the recipient of the favour or some of his friends take some of the ashes which are always kept ready at the far end of the king's audience chamber for the purpose and scatter it over the head of the favoured one, who then returns grovelling until he arrives before the king. Then he makes the drumming gesture as before and rises.

...The man raises his right hand to near his ear. There he places it, it being held up straight, and places it in contact with his left hand upon his thigh. The left hand has the palm extended so as to receive the right elbow. The right hand too has the palm extended with the fingers held close beside each other like a comb and touching the lobe of the ear.

QUESTION:

1. Can you figure out how to make this gesture? Try it and see....

2. Why do people do all these things in front of the king?

3. What is it supposed to show?

SEGMENT VI:

On the feast day, when Dugha has finished his performance, the poets come. They are called jula [spelled out], of which the singular is jali. Each of them has enclosed himself within an effigy made of feathers, resembling a [bird called] shaqshaq, on which is fixed a head made of wood with a red beak as though it were the head of a shaqshaq. They stand in front of the sultan in

this comical shape and recite their poems. I was told that their poetry was a kind of exhortation in which they say to the sultan: "This banbi on which you are sitting was sat upon by such-and such a king and of his good deeds were so-and-so; and such-and-such a king, and of his good deeds were so-and-so; so you do good deeds which will be remembered after you." Then the chief of the poets mounts the steps of the banbi and places his head in the lap of the sultan. Then he mounts to the top of the banbi and places his head on the sultan's right shoulder, then upon his left shoulder, talking in their language. Then he descends. I was informed that this act was already old before Islam, and they had continued with it.

QUESTIONS:

1. Based on this story, what kind of entertainment did the kings prefer?

2. What were the poets allowed to do that other people couldn't?

3. What does this tell you about the importance of poets to Mali?

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B

DUTIES OF THE KING
(Primary Sources)

SEGMENT I:

Complaints and appeals against administrative oppression (mazalim) are placed before this king and he delivers judgment on them himself. As a rule nothing is written down; his commands are given verbally. He has judges, scribes, and government offices (diwan).

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is the law of the land of Mali?

2. Why do you think things aren't written down?

SEGMENT II:

I was present at the sultan's session one day when one of their faqihs, who had arrived from a distant country, came and stood before the sultan and spoke to him at length. The qadi rose and said that he spoke the truth, then the sultan said that they spoke the truth. Each one of them took his turban from his head and sprinkled himself with dust in front of him. By my side there was one of the white men, who said to me: "Do you know what they said?" I said: "I don't know." He said: "The faqih has given the information that the locusts have fallen on their country. One of their righteous men went out to the place where the locusts were and was at a loss what to do and said: 'This is a lot of locusts.' A locust answered him and said: 'God sends us to the country in which there is much oppression in order to spoil its crops.'" The qadi and the sultan believed him and the latter said thereupon to the emirs: "I am innocent of oppression and any one of you who is oppressive I will punish. And if anybody knows of an oppressor and does not tell me of him, then the sin of that oppressor will fall upon his neck, and God will call him to reckoning!" When he spoke these words the fararivya took off their turbans and asserted their innocence of oppressions.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why are the locusts attacking? (According to the locusts.)

2. What does the king warn his "sub-chiefs" of?

3. To the ruler and most likely the king of Mali, what type of government is good?

SEGMENT III:

Sultan Musa told him a great deal about himself and his country and the people of the Sudan who were his neighbors. One of the things which he told him was that his country was very extensive and contiguous with the Ocean. By his sword and his armies he had conquered 24 cities each with its surrounding district with villages and estates.

QUESTIONS:

1. What must Mali's sultan be skilled at?

2. What does he need to help him?

SEGMENT IV:

The king of this country imports Arab horses and pays high prices for them. His army numbers about 100,000, of whom about 10,000 are cavalry mounted on horses and the remainder infantry without horses or other mounts. They have camels but do not know how to ride them with saddles.

QUESTION:

1. Why do you think the king is so powerful?

SEGMENT V:

The officers of this king, his soldiers, and his guard receive gifts of land and presents. Some among the greatest of them receive as much as 50,000 mitqals of gold a year, besides which the king provides them with horses and clothing. He is much concerned with giving them fine garments and making his cities into capitals.

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B

QUESTION:

1. How does the king keep his army happy?

SEGMENT VI:

I asked him if he had enemies with whom he fought wars and he said: 'Yes, we have a violent enemy who is to the Sudan as the Tatars are to you. They are wide in the face and flat-nosed. They shoot well with [bow and] arrows (nushshab)...Battles take place between us and they are formidable because of their accurate shooting. War between us has its ups and downs.'...

The king of this country wages a permanently Holy War on the pagans of the Sudan who are his neighbors. They are more numerous than could ever be counted.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who does Mali often fight against?

2. What is the enemy good at?

3. Why do you think the enemy is called pagans?

SEGMENT VII:

The sultan of this country has sway over the land of the "desert of gold," whence they bring him gold every year. The inhabitants of that land are savage pagans whom the sultan would subject to him if he wished. But the sovereigns of this kingdom have learned by experience that whenever one of them has conquered one of these gold towns, established Islam there, and sounded the call to prayer, the harvest of gold dwindles and falls to nothing; meanwhile it grows and expands in neighboring pagan countries. When experience had confirmed them in this observation, they left the gold country in the hands of its pagan inhabitants and contented themselves with assuring their obedience and paying tribute.

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B

QUESTIONS:

1. Look at your map, what do you think the "desert of gold" is?

2. What would happen when the king of Mali tried to convert inhabitants of the desert of gold?

3. What did the kings of Mali finally do?

4. What does this tell us about the power of the kings of Mali?

SEGMENT VIII:

...He also stated that there are pagan nations (umam) in his kingdom from whom he does not collect the tribute (jizya) but whom he simply employs in extracting the gold from its deposits. The gold is extracted by digging pits about a man's height in depth and the gold is found embedded in the sides of the pits or sometimes collected at the bottom of them.

QUESTIONS:

1. How is the gold extracted?

2. Why do the kings leave the gold-digging people on their own?

3. Why are they so important to the king?

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT C

MALI THE PLACE
(Primary Source)

SEGMENT I:

Be it known that this kingdom lies to the south of the extreme West and adjoins the Atlantic Ocean ...This country is very hot. The means of subsistence are difficult, the varieties of food few. The people are tall, with jet black complexion and crinkly hair. Their height is chiefly due to their [long] legs, not the structure of the trunk.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where is Mali located? Does your map agree?

2. Describe the weather in Mali.

3. Describe the appearance of the people.

4. What conclusions can you draw about what life was like there?

SEGMENT II:

In the Nile as it flows through their country there are big crocodiles of huge size which may be ten cubits or more long. Al-Dukkali said that one of these crocodiles was caught which had received a spear ten spans long in its heart. The gall-bladder is poison, and is taken to the king's treasury.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you know about the rivers?

2. If the gall-bladder is poison why do you think it was taken to the king's treasury?

3. What might the king use it for?

SEGMENT III:

Their sheep and goats have no pasture, but go scavenging over the garbage heaps. A single goat may give birth to seven or eight kids at a time. There

are other wild animals in their deserts - donkeys, cows, gazelles, ostriches and the like, elephants, lions, and panthers. None of them are dangerous except to those who get in their way or provoke them. A man may pass close by them without their interfering with him unless he irritates them.

QUESTIONS:

1. List as many <u>facts</u> as you can from the above reading.

2. What conclusion can you draw about how the people of Mali felt about animals?

SEGMENT IV:

They have a wild animal called turummi ... and is a cross between wolf and hyena ...Shaykh Sa'id al-Dukkali said that he saw one with his own eyes. It was hermaphrodite, of the size of a wolf. Whenever it encounters a child or adolescent by night it snatches him up and eats him, but by day it is harmless. It is not bold enough to attack a grown man. It emits a below like that of a bull about to charge. It digs up corpses and eats them. Its teeth are like those of crocodiles, flat (musaffah) and fitting into each other like tenon and mortice.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you know about the turummi?

2. How do you think children felt about going out alone at night? Why?

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT D

THE PEOPLE OF MALI

SEGMENT I:

Among the trees of the brush which is between Iwalatan and Mali there are those which resemble the fruit of the pear, the apple, the peach (khawkh) and the apricot (mishmish), but are not any of these, and among them there are trees which bear fruits like a cucumber (faqqus),which, when ripe, burst open to reveal something like flour. They cook this and eat it and sell it in the markets. They extract from this earth grains like beans which they roast and eat. They taste like roasted chickpeas (hummus). Sometimes they grind them and make from them something resembling fritters (isfanj) and fry them with gharti [spelled out]. Gharti is a fruit like a pear, very sweet. ..Its kernel is crushed and an oil is extracted from it, for which they have many uses. For instance, they cook with it, and light their lanterns with it, and fry these fritters with it, and anoint themselves with it, and mix it with an earth which they have and coat the roofs of their houses with it, as one does with lime. It is abundant and easily available with them and transported from place to place in big gourds of which one contains as much as a qulla in our country contains.

Gourds (qar') grow very big in the land of the Sudan. They make bowls of them, cutting each one in half so as to make two bowls, and carve them elegantly. When one of them goes on a journey he is followed by his male and female slaves ('abiduh wa-jawarih) carrying his furnishings and the vessels from which he eats and drinks made of gourds.

QUESTIONS:

1. Name at least five facts dealing with the food of Mali.

2. Why are gourds so important?

SEGMENT II:

Al-Dukkali said to me: "The people of this kingdom make much use of magic and poison. They take great interest in them and are very exact in them. They have plants and animals from which they compound fatal poisons, especially a kind of fish which they have and the gall bladders of crocodiles. They

are poisons for which there are no antidotes."

QUESTIONS:

1. What do the people know how to make well?

2. What does that tell you about how the people might behave?

SEGMENT III:

...Their brave cavaliers wear golden bracelets. Those whose knightly valor is greater wear gold necklets also. If it is greater still they add gold anklets. Whenever a a hero (batal) adds to the list of his exploits the king gives him a pair of wide trousers, and the greater the number of a knight's exploits the bigger the size of his trousers. These trousers are characterized by narrowness in the leg and ampleness in the seat. The king is distinguished in his costume by the fact that he lets a turban-end dangle down in front of him. His trousers are of twenty pieces and nobody dares to wear the same.

QUESTIONS:

1. What types of people are honored and how are they honored?

2. What does this tell you about what is important to the people?

SEGMENT IV:

It is their custom not to bury their dead unless they be people of rank and status. Otherwise those without rank and the poor and strangers are thrown into the bush like other dead creatures.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do the people do with dead bodies?

SEGMENT V:

In their deserts there are undomesticated buffalo which are hunted like wild beasts, in the following fashion. They carry away little calves such as may be reared in their houses, and when they want to hunt the buffaloes they send

out one of these calves to the place where the buffaloes are so that they may see it, make towards it, and become used to it because of the unity of species which is a cause of association. When they have become used to it the hunters shoot them with poisoned arrows. Having cut out the poisoned place, that is, where the arrow has struck and round about it, they eat the flesh.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe how the people of Mali hunt buffalo.

2. What can you conclude about the people of Mali from this description?

SEGMENT VI:

Merchants of...Cairo have told me of the profits which they made from the Africans, saying that one of them might buy a shirt or cloak (thawb) or robe (izar) or other garment for five dinars when it was not worth one. Such was their simplicity and trustfulness that it was possible to practice any deception on them. They greeted anything that was said to them with credulous acceptance. But later they formed the very poorest opinion of the Egyptians because of the obvious falseness of everything they said to them and their outrageous behavior in fixing the prices of the provisions and other goods which were sold to them, so much so that were they to encounter today the most learned doctor of religious science and he were to stay that he was Egyptian they would be rude to him and view him with disfavour because of the ill treatment which they had experienced at their hands.

QUESTIONS:

1. What happened to the Mali people in Cairo?

2. What does that say about their personalities?

3. Later when they learned the truth, how did things change?

SEGMENT VII:

Ibn Amir Hajib continued: "I asked sultan Musa how the kingdom fell to

him, and he said: 'We belong to a house which hands on the kingship by inheritance. The king who was my predecessor did not believe that it was impossible to discover the furthest limit of the Atlantic Ocean and wished vehemently to do so. So he equipped 200 ships filled with men and the same number equipped with gold, water, and provisions enough to last them for years, and said to the man deputed to lead them: "Do not return until you reach the end of it or your provisions and water give out." They departed and a long time passed before anyone came back. Then one ship returned and we asked the captain what news they brought. He said: "Yes, O Sultan, we travelled for a long time until there appeared in the open sea [as it were] a river with a powerful current. Mine was the last of those ships. The [other] ships went on ahead but when they reached that place they did not return and no more was seen of them and we do not know what became of them. As for me, I went about at once and did not enter that river." But the sultan disbelieved him.

Then that sultan got ready 2,000 ships, 1,000 for himself and the men whom he took with him and 1,000 for water and provisions. He left me to deputize for him and embarked on the Atlantic Ocean with his men. That was the last we saw of him and all those who were with him, and so I became king in my own right."'

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Mansa Musa become king?

2. What had happened to the last king?

3. What did the people of Mali try to do?

3. What does this tell you about the people of Mali?

SEGMENT VIII:

This is a list of "qualities" that an Arab scholar gave to the people of Mali after he had lived among them.

Among the admirable qualities of these people, the following are to be noted:

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT D

1. The small number of acts of injustice that one finds there; for the Negroes are of all peoples those who most abhor injustice. The sultan pardons no one who is guilty of it.

2. The complete and general safety one enjoys throughout the land. The traveler has no more reason than the man who stays at home to fear brigands, thieves, or ravishers.

3. The blacks do not confiscate the goods of white men (that is, of North Africans) who die in their country, not even when these consist of big treasures. The deposit them, on the contrary, with a man of confidence among the whites until those who have a right to the goods present themselves and take possession.

4. They make their prayers punctually; they assiduously attend their meetings of the faithful, and punish their children if they should fail in this. On Fridays, anyone who is late at the mosque will find nowhere to pray, the crowd is so great. Their custom is to send their servants to the mosque to spread their prayer-mats in the due and proper place, and to remain there until they, the masters, should arrive....

5. The Negroes wear fine white garments on Fridays. If by chance a man has no more than one shirt . . . at least he washes it before putting it on to go to public prayer.

6. They zealously learn the Koran [the Muslim holy book] by heart. Those children who are neglectful in this are put in chains until they have memorized the Koran. On one festival day I visited the qadi and saw children thus enchained and asked him: "Will you not let them free?" He replied: "Only when they know their Koran by heart."

Another day I was passing by a young Negro, a handsome lad and very well dressed, who had a heavy chain on his feet. I said to my companion: "What's happened to the boy? Has he murdered someone?" The young Negro heard what I had said and began laughing. "They have chained him," I was told, "simply to make him memorize the Koran."

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT E

MANSA MUSA HIMSELF

SEGMENT I:

During my first journey to Cairo and sojourn there I heard talk of the arrival of the Sultan Musa [Mansa Musa, emperor of Mali] and I found the Cairenes [residents of Cairo] very glad to talk of the large expenditures of those people.

I questioned the Emir [the Muslim leader], who spoke of the sultan's noble appearance, dignity, and trustworthiness. "When I went out to greet him in the name of the glorious Sultan el Malik en Nasir [of Egypt]," he told me, "he gave me the warmest of welcomes and treated me with the most careful politeness. But he would talk to me only through an interpreter [that is, his spokesman or linguist] although he could speak perfect Arabic. He carried his imperial treasure in many pieces of gold, worked or otherwise.

QUESTIONS:

1. How does this Arab scholar describe Mansa Musa?

2. How did Mansa Musa treat the Arab scholar?

3. How did Mansa Musa speak to the Arab?

4. Why do you think Mansa Musa only spoke through an interpreter even though he spoke Arabic?

SEGMENT II:

"I suggested that he [Mansa Musa] should go up to the palace and meet the Sultan [of Egypt]. But he refused, saying: 'I came for the pilgrimage, and for nothing else, and I do not wish to mix up my pilgrimage with anything else.' He argued about this. However, I well understood that the meeting was repugnant to him because he was loath to kiss the ground [before the Sultan] or to kiss his hand. I went on insisting and he went on making excuses. But imperial protocol obliged me to present him and I did not leave him until he had agreed.

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: DOCUMENT E

QUESTIONS:

1. What didn't Mansa Musa want to do?

2. Why did he not want to do this?

3. What might that tell us about his personality?

SEGMENT III:

"When he came into the Sultan's presence we asked him to kiss the ground. But he refused and continued to refuse saying: 'However can this be?' Then a wise man of his suite whispered several words to him that I could not understand 'Very well,' he thereupon declared, 'I will prostrate myself before Allah who created me and brought me into the world.' Having done so he moved toward the Sultan. The latter rose for a moment to welcome him and asked him to sit beside him: then they had a long conversation. After Sultan Musa had left the palace the Sultan of Cairo sent him gifts of clothing for himself, his courtiers, and all those who were with him; saddled and bridled horses for himself and his chief officers....

QUESTIONS:

1. Once Mansa Musa went to the sultan what did he refuse to do?

2. How did Mansa Musa finally get around this situation?

3. What happened next?

4. What kind of impression did Mansa Musa make on the Sultan of Cairo and how do you know?

SEGMENT IV:

"This sultan Musa, during his stay in Egypt both before and after his journey to the Noble Hijaz, maintained a uniform attitude of worship and turning towards God. It was as though he were standing before Him because of His continual presence in his mind. He and all those with him behaved in the same manner and were well-dressed, grave, and dignified. He was noble and

generous and performed many acts of charity and kindness. He had left his country with 100 loads of gold which he spent during his Pilgrimage on the tribes who lay along his route from his country to Egypt, while he was in Egypt, and again from Egypt to the Noble Hijaz and back.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some words that are used to describe Mansa Musa?

SEGMENT V

Muhanna' b. 'Abd al-Baqi al-'Ujrumi the guide informed me that he accompanied sultan Musa when he made the Pilgrimage and that the sultan was very open-handed towards the pilgrims and the inhabitants of the Holy Places. He and his companions maintained great pomp and dressed magnificently during the journey. He gave away much wealth in alms. "About 200 mithqals of gold fell to me" and Muhanna' "and he gave other sums to my companions." Muhanna' waxed eloquent in describing the sultan's generosity, magnanimity, and opulence.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does being "open-handed towards the pilgrims" mean?

2. What does that tell us about his personality?

LESSON THREE

HISTORICAL BIAS

A. Objectives

1. Students will discuss the concept of historical perspective or bias and then attempt to distinguish evidence of bias in the histories of Mali that they have created.

2. Students will through discussion reach the conclusion that history is always limited by those who write it and must therefore be read critically.

3. Students will in the future be able to apply this knowledge to other historical settings.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Ask the students to think of a time they may have had a fight with a brother or sister when their parents were not home. When their parents got home and found out something had happened, they asked, "What happened here?" Imagine that only your brother or sister was allowed to tell "what went on" to your parents. How would you feel? Why wouldn't you like it? What are you most worried about happening? Students should see that there would be only "one side" to the story and they would find that "unfair." It would be unfair to the students because most students would believe that in this case their sibling would only tell the story of what "went on" from their perspective or bias. Define these words.

2. Now ask students to think about yesterday and the work they did on Mali. What does the story about you and your brother or sister have to do with the history you wrote of Mali? Where did you get all

your information on Mali? Who wrote it? Try to get the students to arrive at the conclusion that "one side" was given to them (the side of the Arab scholars). That "side" will come with a perspective and bias of the Arab scholars. What might that bias be? When you as a class draw your conclusions about Mali whose bias was influencing your history? What might that bias be?

3. Explain to the class that you are going to show them an example of what you've just been talking about. Ask them to take out their work from yesterday and find a reference to the customs of Mali that had to do with dead bodies. The source that you want them to quote is segment 4 of the People readings:

   a. *"It is their custom not to bury their dead unless they be people of rank and status. Otherwise those without rank and the poor and strangers are thrown to the bush like other dead creatures."*

   b. What conclusions does this cause you to draw about the people of Mali? (They don't care about the dead, they don't care about the poor, they treat dead people like animals etc.) Most students will see this as a negative behavior and you can explain to them that the Arabs also saw this custom in a bad light. Why do we see this as negative? (It's not the way we do it, thus we are uncomfortable.)

4. Now explain that the people of Mali had a very specific reason for laying their dead in the bush. Hyenas were very common in that part of Africa. Hyenas will often feed on a corpse. According to the people's religious tradition the hyena was endowed with spiritual gifts and by eating on the corpse of the dead the animal helped to get the person's soul to the afterlife. The hyena was sort of a means of transpor-

tation to heaven. Now ask the students why it was so important for the dead to be laid out in the bush? Discuss the importance of this.

5. This explanation of this tradition will usually cause students to make comments about how "gross" or "sick" this practice is. This is an excellent opportunity to have them look at their bias. Shouldn't historians try to leave bias out? Is that possible? Does the history that the students wrote yesterday reflect this new information? Have the students quickly rework that section of their history. Discuss to the length you feel necessary.

6. When you think the students have a working knowledge of bias and perspective as discussed in this lesson allow them either working individually or as a group to go back to their history and try to find examples of other times they or the Arab scholars may have been biased. Have the students cite the reading and explain what they think the bias might be. Some possible areas to search in can include:

   a. lack of writing
   b. throwing dust on their heads
   c. story of the Turummi
   d. the voyage across the Atlantic

7. After the students have shared with the class some other examples remind them that having a bias or perspective does not make theirs or any other history worse than another. It is simply an element of history. Critical thinking while reading is the key to being a good history student.

8. Remind the students that biased or not, the Arabs are our only main sources on Mali. We are very depen-

dent on what they wrote. As far as we can tell there is no evidence of any written material created by the people of Mali themselves and so we must depend upon what the Arab scholars have written. At this point any factual information about Mali that you gleaned from the teacher background reading that did not come out in yesterday's discussion of the readings should be presented. By the end of this portion of the unit the students should have been presented with the amount of information you as the teacher have chosen to present that will suit your class. This will lead the students into the culminating enrichment lesson that follows.

LESSON FOUR

STUDENT PROJECTS

A. Objectives

1. Students will synthesize information presented in the primary source readings into a culminating project that takes at least three class periods to complete.

2. Students will gain experience in higher level thinking skills through the formulation, design and creation of this project.

3. Students will gain poise in presentation skills when the project is shown before the class.

B. Lesson Activities

1. In the junior high/middle school setting these types of projects are always highly motivating and rewarding for the students, for they allow the students to do far more than simply memorize information. They allow the student to take some information, digest it and come out with some new creation that is uniquely their own. Depending on your class and your teaching style you may want to use one of these ideas or all of them. I do suggest, however, that you allow the students a variety of options to support the divergent personality types we have in our classrooms. Also it is important in a project that spans several days to check in on progress in some regular fashion, as without this check many students fall through the cracks and end up turning nothing in. This, of course, is meant to be only a partial list of ideas to use as you wish.

2. Writing Activities: Writing should be an essential part of any history curriculum. Students could write

a journal of what daily life might have been like for a resident of Mali. Students could write a narrative short story of Mansa Musa's trip to Mecca or many other topics covered in the readings. One student might care to write a poem that they think might have been read by the king's poets to him while he sat upon his throne.

3. Role-Play: Some students may enjoy acting out a scene that they create dealing with life in Mali. Staging a scene of the king on his throne surrounded by attendants is always a popular one. Students also might act out the gathering of food, the extraction of poison from a crocodile's gall bladder or the arrival of Mansa Musa in Cairo. An excellent idea is having students do a news show from Cairo in 1324 reporting the arrival of Mansa Musa to the city. Along with on the scene reports and person on the street interviews, some students could get reporting on Mali itself as sort of background information to the main story of the visit. Two other excellent events to cover either in the news format or as a separate scene would be the meeting at court over the locust infestation or the departure of the ships who set out to explore the Atlantic ocean. The possibilities are endless!

4. Artwork: Let the students imagination run wild with pictures of Mansa Musa, his gold, his court life or any other aspect of Mali's culture. To aid in giving students some visuals, see the unit's bibliography, especially Gariake, *Kingdoms of Africa*, an oversized book with many excellent pictures.

It is important that after the students have spent so much time and effort in making these projects a success, they deserve time and recognition for their efforts. Choose a day or two when all the projects are

to be presented. Have all students read at least part of their writings aloud; have each person get up to hold up and briefly explain their artwork, have the news shows and role plays performed before the class (invite other classes if you can). This activity always promotes a positive feeling for the students and it makes history come alive as a subject for them. Students will remember the day they played Mansa Musa, King of Mali, far longer than any objective test you could give them on Mali.

C. Evaluation

The project should be used as the chief tool of evaluation for this unit. The students should be aware that their grade on the project, and thus the unit, is based on **how well they use information from their primary sources** in their project. If a project is artistic, interesting but not based on information from the primary source, it should not meet your requirements. The objective is to have the students synthesize the documents and come out with something new. It is only through this method that the students will develop the critical thinking skills that are important to success in history. If, for your own needs you would like to give an objective test please do so in addition to the project. However, replacing the project with a test would not meet the objectives of this unit.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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5. Harris, Joseph. *Africans and their History.* New York: Mentor Books, 1987. The most widely available paperback with a survey of African history, pre-history to the present.

6. Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1973. The most complete study available of these two cultures to date. Discussion of statecraft, trade and culture.

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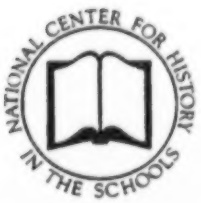
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